

COMPILATION AND EVOLUTION OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASE AGGREGATIONS FFAB AND WOW: AN EXERCISE IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION OVER MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

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Abstract: Following 35 years of research and development and resolute database compilation, two significant and comprehensive bibliographic database aggregations were released by NISC in early 2010 and made accessible on the EBSCOhost platform, www.ebscohost.com. FFAB (Fish, Fisheries and Aquatic Biodiversity Worldwide) combines 19 databases and comprises 1.5 million references with abstracts and keyword indexing. Similarly, WOW (Waters and Oceans Worldwide) comprises 20 aggregated databases and 2 million records. The launch of these information resources is a triumph for international collaboration extending over 35 years. This paper describes the technological challenges of maintaining, compiling and developing the FISHLIT, WATERLIT, FIRI (Fishing Industry Research Index) and Aquatic Biology Collection (ABC) databases from 195 to the present day and describes their inclusion in NISC database aggregations over the same period. Technological challenges have included porting the data from mainframe to PC, from DOS to Windows, and between successive data capture systems (mainframe-based STAIRS, to PC-based PICK, and then Access) and more recently to the web. Similarly, the database products/aggregations have moved from CD ROM to online hosting on NISC BiblioLine, to now being made available on the EBSCOhost platform. The paper goes on to describe the challenges of working with an international team to compile information resources which are aggregations of databases sourced from major aquatic, marine and fisheries institutions based across the globe. FFAB and WOW represent database combinations never attempted before and thus provide new extensive collaboration by documentalists, software developers and data compilers based in the US, UK, Africa, Europe and Asia. Thus the design and development of FFAB and WOW has been a truly international project, compiling one world of information from widespread sources of information and expertise.

Keywords: Databases, aquatic biology, NISC, fishing, aggregators.